

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 014 084

CG 000 057

STUDENT ROLE ORIENTATION IN THE FRESHMAN YEAR--ITS STABILITY, CHANGE AND CORRELATES AT 13 SMALL COLLEGES.

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EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC-\$0.44 9P.

DESCRIPTORS- RESEARCH, *COLLEGE FRESHMEN, *STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, *ORIENTATION, TYPOLOGY, *STUDENT COLLEGE RELATIONSHIP, PERSONALITY STUDIES, QUESTIONNAIRES, STUDENT ATTITUDES, STUDENT MOTIVATION, STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, STUDENT EVALUATION, STUDENT INTERESTS, PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT, EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, *ROLE PERCEPTION, REPORTS, COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT SCALE, OMNIBUS PERSONALITY INVENTORY, ROLE ORIENTATION INSTRUMENT

STUDENT ORIENTATION TOWARD COLLEGE WAS STUDIED BY ADMINISTERING A UNIFORM BATTERY OF TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES, INCLUDING THE CLARK AND TROW ROLE ORIENTATION INSTRUMENT (RO), TO 1,988 ENTERING FRESHMEN AT 13 SMALL COLLEGES. IN THE SPRING, 25 PERCENT OF THESE STUDENTS WERE GIVEN MOST OF THE SAME BATTERY. STUDENTS WERE CLASSIFIED INTO FOUR TYPES ON THE BASIS OF THE RO'S--VOCATIONAL, ACADEMIC, COLLEGIATE, AND NON-CONFORMIST. THERE WAS MODERATE STABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL CHOICES BETWEEN THE FALL AND SPRING TESTING. WHEN THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT SCALE (CUES) SCORES FOR EACH COLLEGE WERE CORRELATED WITH THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS FOR EACH RO, THE RESULTING COEFFICIENTS SHOWED PATTERNS CONSISTENT WITH EXPECTATION. STUDENTS HAVING DIFFERENT RO'S SHOW APPRECIABLY DIFFERENT PERSONALITY SCORES AS MEASURED BY THE OMNIBUS PERSONALITY INVENTORY (OPI). WHEN RO CHANGES ARE COMPARED WITH CUES SCORES, RO SEEMS INFLUENCED BY ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES. THE STUDY INDICATES THAT--(1) THE RO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM IS USEFUL IN STUDYING COLLEGE STUDENT GROUPS, (2) DESPITE FAIRLY SMALL NUMBERS OF OBSERVATIONS, THE INSTRUMENT IS SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO SHOW STATISTICALLY RELIABLE RELATIONSHIPS, AND (3) THE SHORT TIME NEEDED TO ADMINISTER THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND EASE OF COMMUNICATING DATA FROM IT ARE ADVANTAGEOUS. FUTURE RESEARCH MIGHT EXPLORE THE HYPOTHESIS THAT RO IS INFLUENCED BY ENVIRONMENT. (PR)

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Student Role Orientation in the Freshman Year:
Its stability, change and correlates at 13 small colleges

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Project on Student Development*

The Project on Student Development in Small Colleges is conducting a study at 13 colleges of those students who entered as freshmen in the fall of 1965. Its purposes are to describe change in students as this occurs within a group of quite diverse colleges, and to study factors relevant to students' dropping out of or continuing in college.+

During the first year of the Project, 1965-66, entering freshmen on all 13 campuses were given a uniform battery of questionnaires and tests within the first week of their arrival. This procedure normally applied to the entire group of entering freshmen on a given campus, though there were some exceptions due to unforeseen events. The following spring a random sample of approximately 25% of the same students was again administered most of the same test battery. Currently we are analyzing and reporting to the administrators and faculties of the participating colleges data from these two freshman test batteries. Also we are gathering further data this spring from a sample of the same students near the end of their second year of college.

The purpose of this report is to describe findings of the first year bearing upon student orientation toward college as this is assessed through a questionnaire technique based on the fourfold typology conceived by Clark and Trow (1966). Following a brief description of the technique, we shall take up the questions:

- a) What degrees of stability and of change in role orientations of the students occur between the fall and the spring testing of identical individuals?
- b) What cross-sectional relationships exist between role orientation data and data from other instruments, viz., the College and University Environment Scale (CUES) and the Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI)?
- c) As students modify their role orientations, in what ways are these changes related to data from the CUES and the OPI?

The Role Orientation Instrument

Clark and Trow (1966, p. 19) have described four "orientations toward a college education which are represented on American campuses and which may be in competition on any one campus." Identifying these as the Vocational, the Academic, the Collegiate, and the Nonconformist, they find them likely to flourish in a variety of mixed forms on any given campus and expect the individual students typically to participate in several of them, though usually finding his dominant orientation embodied in one.

*Project on Student Development in Small Colleges, with administrative offices in Plainfield, Vermont, is sponsored by the Committee on Research and Development of the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges and is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, MHO-1929-01.

+A description of the participating colleges and their students has been presented by Chickering (1966).

ED014084

The Clark-Trow typology questionnaire item** consists of four paragraphs each of which states a "philosophy of higher education" by describing what general goals are to be emphasized in college, what activities typically go with this view, what attitudes and involvements are typical of it. The student is asked to rank the statements in the order of their "closeness to your own philosophy of higher education" (Educational Testing Service, 1965). The student's "typology" is defined according to which of the four "philosophies" he selects as his first choice. In this questionnaire application of the concept, as Peterson (1965) notes, the intent is to describe not subcultures but the orientations of students toward higher education. It has to do, then, with students' motives and frameworks of thinking vis-a-vis the college environment in which they live. It is a broad characterization of the student stance, or role orientation, as the student himself reports it within the terms set by the item.

The principal research on this instrument to the present has been done by Peterson (1965). Through examining the relationship of typology responses to companion items in the College Student Questionnaire (Educational Testing Service, 1965), he established their substantial validity at the level of group data from a large sample of entering students at 23 American institutions of higher learning. Relationships consistent with the intent of the typology were found over a broad scope of topics, including intended major field, interest in extracurricular activities, preference for certain curricular and instructional policies, demographic factors, religious preference, attitudes toward parents and peers, and cultural sophistication. The instrument thus is one of wide relevance but of marked brevity, dealing with the student's motivational orientation to college.

In the present study, typology responses of 1988 students were obtained in the fall testing session, of whom 1147 were men and 841 were women. The spring sample made available responses of 460 students on the two occasions, 229 men and 231 women.

The distribution of responses from this sample as compared with preliminary comparative data on entering freshmen students at 23 American institutions of higher learning (Educational Testing Service, 1965b) appears in Table 1. The figures for Project subjects are exclusive of 10 percent of the group, (not included in the figures above) whose fall responses were incomplete or otherwise defective.

Table 1. Percentage Distributions of Typology Responses

<u>Group</u>	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Collegiate</u>	<u>Non-conformist</u>
ETS Sample	27	19	51	4
Project Sample, fall	26	26	40	8
Project sample, spring	25	21	44	9

Preponderance of Collegiate orientations occurs in each group, somewhat less in the Project group than in the ETS sample. Nonconformists, the least frequent orientation in each group, occur twice as often in the Project group as in the ETS sample. The Project group showed a moderate shift toward Collegiate orientation between fall and spring, principally at the expense of the Academic Orientation.

Stability of Fall Typology Choice

To what extent do freshman students change their minds about first choice of "philosophy of education" between fall and spring? Comparison of the responses of identical individuals in the two testing sessions shows that slightly over half repeated the same choice in the spring, the others changing to some other first choice (Table 2). Fall choices in the Collegiate category were more likely to be

** This item was used in the present study by special permission of Educational Testing Service.

retained than in other typologies, followed in order of stability by fall choices of Nonconformist. For choices of second, third and fourth ranking of orientations, fall-to-spring stability held in 45% of the cases for men and 46% for women.

Table 2. Percent Same Typology, Fall and Spring

	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Collegiate</u>	<u>Nonconformist</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	47	51	61	58	54
Females	35	30	71	42	51
Totals	41	41	66	50	53

Individual choices, in sum, show a moderate degree of stability through the freshman year, but also a substantial amount of shifting; and first choices show greater stability than the three later choices.

Cross-sectional relationships.

a. CUES and Role Orientation

The College and University Environment Scale (Pace, 1963) produces scores summarizing the student's perception of his college environment in terms of five variables, designated as Practicality, Community, Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship. CUES scores for the Project colleges were available through responses of groups of 100 students on each campus, selected randomly within all four undergraduate classes, in the spring of 1966. ~~Average~~ CUES scores for each college were correlated with the percent of students of each sex for each role orientation as expressed by entering Freshmen in the fall (Table 3). The resulting coefficients seemed to run generally in patterns consistent with expectation, assuming that entering students had fairly accurate conceptions of the atmosphere of the respective institutions which they had chosen to attend. For example, the Vocational orientation, essentially practical rather than cultural, shows a negative relationship with Awareness -- high score on the latter implying a high institutional value upon esthetic, philosophical and poetic interests.

Table 3. Correlations of Average CUES Scores
with Percent of Each Typology, Entering Freshmen *+

Typology (% 1st choice)		Practicality	Community	Awareness	Propri.	Scholarship
Vocational	M	.71	.04	-.58	.60	-.24
	F	.73	.23	-.59	.61	-.34
Academic	M	-.86	-.21	.50	-.64	.21
	F	-.71	-.25	.49	-.48	.36
Collegiate	M	.23	.42	.13	.36	.32
	F	.32	.56	-.08	.41	.05
Nonconformist	M	-.73	-.23	.44	-.62	.04
	F	-.62	-.32	.38	-.53	.06

*12 institutions for men, 13 for women.

+z-conversion values of r for samples of 12 cases take the following levels of significance (Guilford, 1950, p. 212):

<u>r</u>	<u>P</u>
.49	.10
.58	.05
.71	.01

A limitation of these data is the small number of observations involved. At the same time, the level of consistency between scores of males and females encourages confidence in a moderate level of stability of the coefficients for such a collection of colleges as this.

b. OPI and Role Orientation

Since a student's role orientation implies a stance having distinct motivational attitudinal qualities, one would reasonably expect systematic relationships between it and measures of personality bearing on cognate variables. Approaching this point empirically, the question was reasoned whether students expressing different role orientations would exhibit appreciably different patterns of scores on at least some of the 14 scales of a broad scope personality instrument, the Omnibus Personality Inventory (Center for the Study of Higher Education, 1963). Average OPI scores of female students choosing each typology are presented in Graph I.

Appreciable differences in average personality scores for students of different typologies are clearly present.* The trend of these differences may be pointed up in relation to the general content of OPI scales -- the four on the far left having to do essentially with intellectual processes, the next three with self-expression and religious orientation (high score indicating relative liberalism), the next several to the right with social relations and adjustment. For Practical Outlook, at the extreme right, high scores imply valuing material possessions, immediate utility, authoritarianism, and practical rather than theoretical interests. Nonconformists, as one extreme, thus tend to score high in intellectual, esthetic, impulsive, self-expressive, theoretical inclinations, but relatively low in social outreach and personal adjustment. Vocationists, at the other extreme, follow precisely opposite trends on at least 11 of the 14 variables -- though on some variables the distinction ^{and} between extreme is little. Academic and Collegiate subjects score at intermediate positions as a rule, and with notable consistency of ranking.

For male subjects (data not presented) the general pattern of results was the same, though the differences in scores among categories other than Nonconformist were less evenly spaced.

These observations may be compared with the summary sketches of the four typologies constructed by Peterson (1965) in the light of his study of College Student Questionnaire responses of students choosing the different typologies. In their bearing on student personality, his descriptive comments were these:

Vocational Type: "His preference is to ingest passively rather than to explore or examine critically....He is apolitical and culturally plebian."

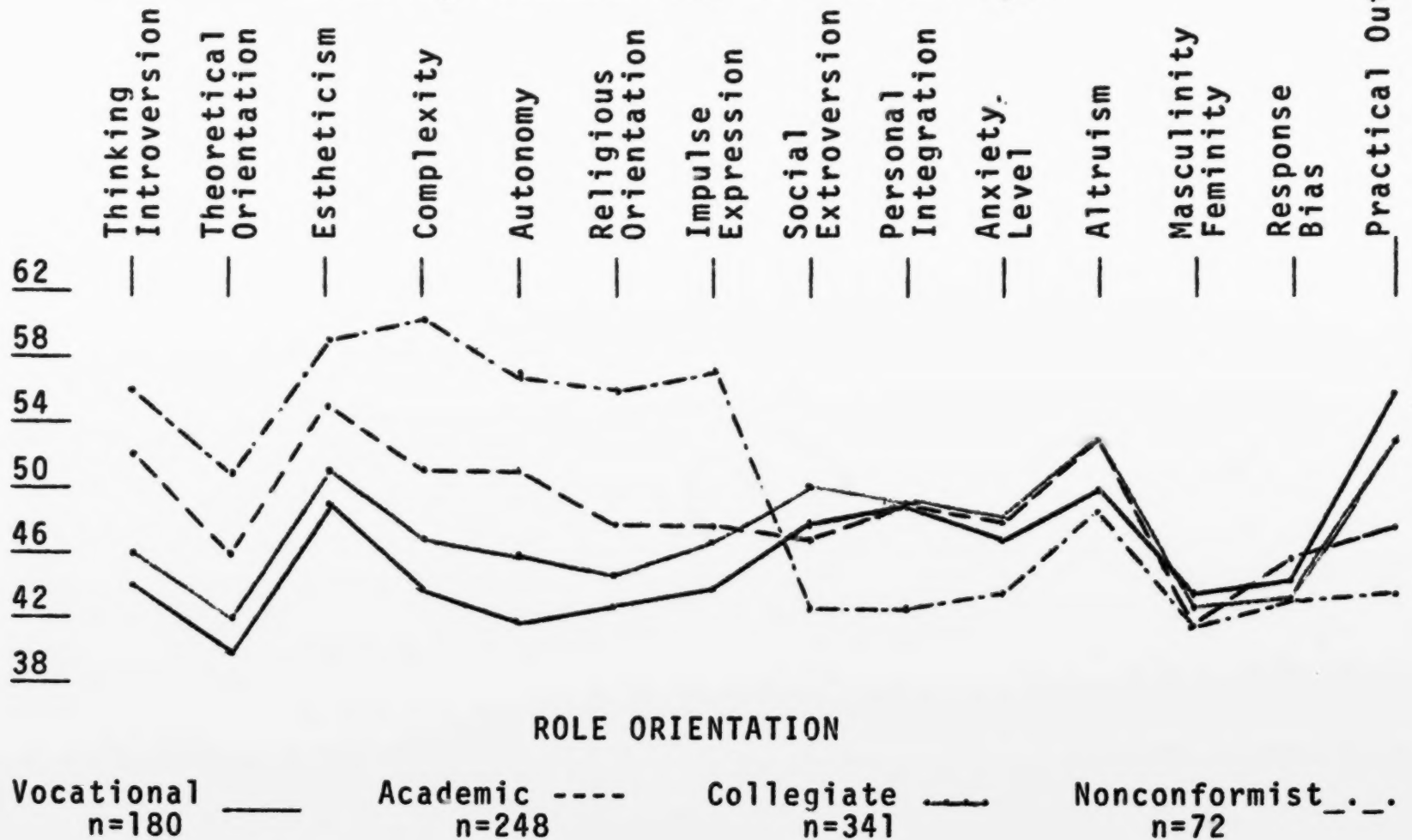
Academic Type: "...a genuine proclivity to explore, explain, and understand for the sake of understanding...his approach to learning is active, independent, and individualistic. He is skeptical of authority. He is introverted yet not disassociated. He is politically liberal and culturally aware."

Collegiate Type: "The collegiate female is distinguished by her essential femininity by her overriding preoccupation with marriage and motherhood. For the collegiate type the important rewards are of an interpersonal nature...His characteristic approach to learning is at best passive and at worst chicane..."

*Differences of two points are significant at the .05 confidence level among pairs of means not involving Nonconformist orientation. When Nonconformist means are involved, differences of three points are significant at the .05 level.

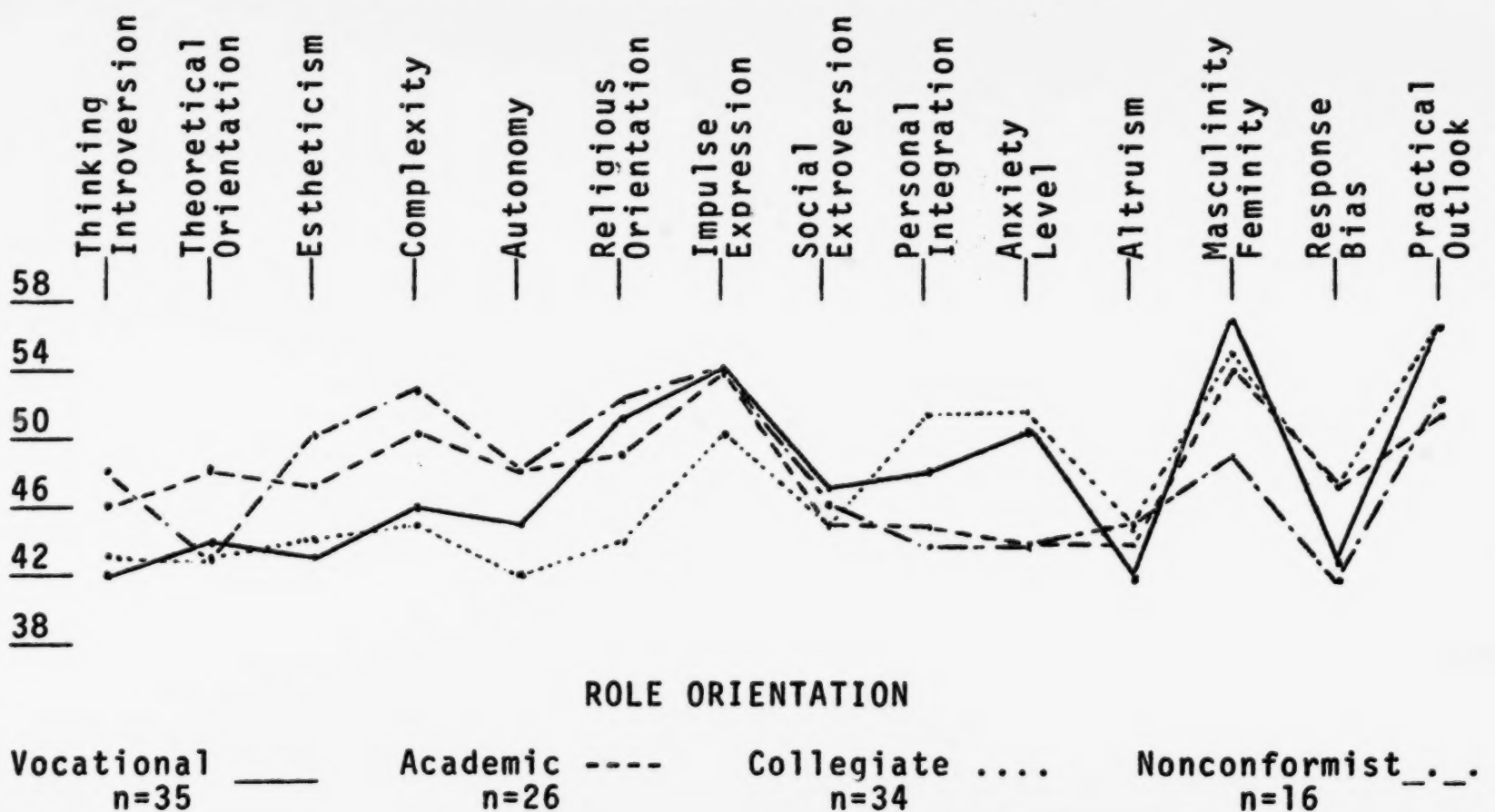
GRAPH I

AVERAGE OPI PROFILES OF STUDENTS OF DIFFERING ROLE ORIENTATIONS
Entering Freshman Females - 13 Colleges



GRAPH II

AVERAGE OPI PROFILES OF STUDENTS
WHO LATER CHANGED TO SPECIFIED ROLE ORIENTATION
Entering Freshman Males - 12 Colleges



He seldom is critical of authority...is an aggressive extrovert. He prefers the forms of the popular culture over more serious idioms."

Nonconformist Type: "...is a seeker...also a rejecter and a derider. Capable of genuine response to serious artistic statement, he is contemptuous of popular culture...(He) regards the classroom as yet another possible source of personally meaningful experience, ideas, and forms of expression...In general he is alienated from the larger society, the 'system', which considers him a misfit."

On the whole the profiles appear strongly consistent with Peterson's report, with the possibly sole exception that Collegiate women are not appreciably outstanding in femininity (low Masculinity-Femininity score).

This finding of distinctive personality profiles for individuals of the various role orientations drawn from a multiple-college sample leads to the further question of whether role orientation may be a way of selecting individuals of reasonably homogeneous personality from different campuses. To explore this, colleges of distinctly different environment (as known from ^{CUES} profiles and a variety of other data available to the Project) were selected, the two criteria of selection being diversity of atmosphere and reasonably large numbers of students of a given role orientation and sex. Average scores of "Academic" men from three schools are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. OPI mean scores of Academic men from three selected colleges

	TI	TO	ES	CO	AU	RO	IE	SE	PI	AL	AM	MF	RB	PO
College A (n=17)	47	43	44	46	46	38	44	47	50	48	51	52	46	53
College B (n=32)	54	57	50	54	57	55	52	47	53	53	50	55	52	43
College C (n=45)	56	54	55	58	60	60	58	45	50	48	48	53	48	43

While there are variables in which differences among the three colleges are slight (e.g., SE, MF)* there are more in which clearly significant differences occur (most dramatically, in RO). Data for the other typologies and for the other sex show fairly similar dispersions of OPI scores of students of similar typologies on campuses selected for contrast. The typology instrument thus is not a feasible means of selecting students homogeneous in personality from widely different student groups.

Correlates of Change of Typology

a) Typology change vs. College and University Environment Scale.

If college environments have distinctive impacts on students, we would expect that role orientations might change through the freshman year in some systematic relationship to CUES scores of the colleges. This relationship was examined through the correlation of ^{sets of} two variables: the average CUES score of each college, and the percent of increase or decrease from fall to spring in first choices of a given role orientation by identical groups of students on each campus. The coefficients obtained appear in Table 5.

*Standard deviations average around 9 for the different variables and samples, and exceed 10 in only three of the 42 instances involved.

Table 5. Correlation coefficients, percent change in typology vs. CUES ~~average~~ scores*

<u>Typology</u>		<u>Practical.</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Awareness</u>	<u>Propriety</u>	<u>Scholarship</u>
Vocational	M	.12	-.76	-.40	-.09	-.55
	F	-.03	-.60	-.34	-.21	-.44
Academic	M	.41	.22	.10	.02	.10
	F	.55	.10	-.36	.36	-.07
Collegiate	M	.04	.07	-.02	.40	.09
	F	.34	.26	.12	.55	.30
Non-conformist	M	-.49	-.38	.12	-.57	.02
	F	-.80	-.27	.44	-.61	.08

*12 Colleges for each sex. ~~The data are product-moment correlation coefficient.~~

General consistency in the correlational patterns of the two sexes again is present. Some of the stronger relationships in evidence are:

<u>CUES Scale</u>	<u>Role Orientation</u>	<u>Direction</u>
Practicality	Nonconformist	Negative
Community	Vocational	Negative
Propriety	Nonconformist	Negative
Scholarship	Vocational	Negative

These relationships seem ^{Sufficient} ~~significant~~ to justify more specifically focused research on the hypothesis that role orientations are influenced by the environmental forces suggested by the CUES scales involved. An attractive question, for example, is why a negative relationship occurs between the Community environmental influence and change toward Vocational orientation. Does a relative lack of warm social relationships on campus incline the student to focus more toward tangible future goals? And will a similar relationship hold for the upper class years, when warm relationships on a co-ed campus might tend to encourage vocationally-oriented thinking?

b) Typology change vs. Omnibus Personality Inventory. As indicated above, there is a tangible consistency between personality and role orientation at the time of entering college. Such being the case, it would be reasonable to assume that those students who changed to any given orientation did so in part because the orientation to which they changed was, in their several colleges, temperamentally more congenial to them than the one with which they entered. In such case we would expect that the fall OPI scores of those individuals who later changed to a given orientation would be distinguishable from those of individuals who changed to other orientations -- and that each group of changers would tend to resemble in OPI patterns the group of those who expressed a corresponding choice of orientation at the time of entering college.

Graph II displays the August fall OPI profiles of students who changed first choices of orientation in the spring to the ones indicated. Similarities to the basic fall profiles are readily observable. The same tendency for Nonconformist to

range high toward the left of the profile, then to become lowest, ~~with reversal again in the score~~, is again apparent; while the other types show considerable consistency with profiles of the corresponding fall typologies. A number of significant differences among means are present, the difference required for significance at the .05 confidence level ranging from four to seven points and averaging about five points. The corresponding female data are roughly similar, though showing greater divergence of Nonconformism from the other orientations and less divergence among the latter three.

Conclusion

The findings of this study add to earlier evidence on the usefulness of the role-orientation questionnaire item as a means of studying college student groups. Typology responses show coherent relationships with CUES and OPI in cross-sectional data, in some cases easily according with expectation, in other cases calling attention to relationships meriting more intensive probing. Even with fairly small numbers of observations, they are sensitive enough to show statistically reliable relationships between their changes during the first year of college and measures of environmental and personality variables. The small time required for administering the role orientation item and the relative ease of communicating data from it are additional advantages.

As Peterson remarks (1965, p. 9), this procedure as a "kind of 'short form'... will continue to be useful for particular research purposes." Work on "long forms" meanwhile continues (e.g., Schumer and Stanfield, 1966).

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